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ON GRIEVE.

THERE may be more truth in the Stoic philosophy that denied grief to be grievous or pain an evil, than we moderns, with our army of anodynes, are willing to admit. In a day when morphine and chloroform, poppy and mandragora, and all the drowsy syrups of the East, are constantly being had recourse to for ills our forefathers endured with Indian fortitude, men are becoming nice and delicate, unwilling even to admit the fellowship of Grief. All periods of mourning are shortened: life, we say, is too brief to be passed in vain retrospects; put a gloze on sorrow; assume a cheerfulness if you have it not; do not shut yourself up with your unhappiness; if you have a grief, hide it; mingle with the crowd, and by-and-by you will cease to feel it. This mode of dealing with sorrow at least possesses one undeniable advantage—it exonerates our friends from showing sympathy, real or affected. And the man who can show a front of cheery stoicism under unhappiness, one who does not visit upon another human being the neglect or calumny which the day may have brought him, deserves praise. If, moreover, he is conscious of having acted unwisely, or his spirit is galled and vexed by the importunate remembrance of past follies; if he can still maintain his usual air of calm and good-humour, he is still further to be honoured for his wisdom. And if he be wise, he knows that few things take the flavour out of life more completely than going perpetually over the same ground in one's thoughts, dwelling on the 'devilry of circumstances,' whereby a small inlet of mischance has broadened into a flood of evil. A man who broods thus over a vexation—eating his own heart, as it were—is unaware, it may be, that the scourge under which he winces is wielded by himself—by his own pride. He is resolved at any cost to redeem the past—to cancel by success his first error or folly; and thus he keeps the wound raw, whereas, if he could once for all acknowledge his past want of wisdom, the

strength he has at his command would be his to labour with, unhampered by vain regrets.

But griefs whose dirge it is well to have sung and be done with, are not all of this nature. They are as various as the beings who suffer them; and that which crushes one, drives another to madness or suicide, or both, yet leaves a third stronger and sounder for the ordeal through which he has passed. Through it he attains to a health and vigour of soul which no mere enjoyment, however pure and right in itself, could give him. It has added elasticity as well as strength to his perceptions—like an ash-tree that, grown in the shade, possesses twice the suppleness, as well as double the resisting power, of one that has sprung up in sunshine. We venture to assert that no human being in this world can be all that he was born capable of becoming unless his soul has been purged by intensest sorrow. Our griefs, too, are the pass-keys by means of which we gain admission into the darkened chambers of another's spirit. By them are we made free of the guild; they enable us to minister to the sad and the lonely by virtue of that fellowship and sympathy which is the child of knowledge and experience. This is one of the advantages bestowed by grief—perhaps the greatest that it has to give. Another valuable fruit of sorrow is that it enables us to estimate at their true value a hundred little daily and hourly vexations, which shrink and dwindle in the presence of majestic grief, ashamed of their own pettiness.

Often grief puts a period to anxiety—a sad ending, perhaps, but still an ending. We have watched, it may be for weeks, beside a sick-bed, now hoping, now fearing; the tension grows with every hour's anxiety, until it is almost too great for human endurance, and at last the bolt is shot, and we are left to face life without the one who was the very life of our lives. But—it is all over; and our consolation must be that the anguish and the dull succeeding blank is ours, not theirs. And if we have parted in unabated love, who shall say that the parting

was ill timed? Misunderstandings, alienation, can never come now; the beloved image is ours, clear and bright for ever.

We have said griefs are as various as those who endure them; and we may add, borne in as many various ways as there are individual sufferers. There is the loud, vehement, passionate grief that wears itself out by its own violence; and there is the deep quiet sorrow that wears itself into the character, purifying every emotion, sanctifying every impulse.

Some, sorrow stuns—turning heart and face to stone. After a great grief, these will pass through life afterwards as though incapable of either joy or sorrow more. These are chiefly those—like the king ‘who never smiled again’—upon whom sorrow has fallen suddenly and unexpectedly, like a bolt from a clear and apparently propitious sky. Others, again, grief renders bitter; and forthwith they make a mock of all things, including themselves; striving to find in scorn and satire a bitter solace for their disenchantment. Of these are the proud in spirit, who covet respect, and despise sympathy, and fairly hate pity. Others, on the contrary, crave so keenly to be commiserated, that every one about them, yea, even those who only casually look upon their lined and pucker'd faces as they meet them in the streets, cannot choose but recognise, and in a manner feel for, the piteous griefs that have left such seams and scars behind them.

Again, there are dispositions that grief turns acid and acrid, making their owners worry and fret about every trifle that goes wrong, urging them to anticipate the dark side of every event not yet come to pass, to express but a grudging satisfaction when their prophecies are unfulfilled, and who perfectly revel, when the event justifies their forebodings, in saying triumphantly: ‘I told you so.’ Some—and these not a few—find relief from grief in anger, in irritability and exactions, who resent other folks’ happiness as an insult almost to their gloomy selves. And having indulged a habit of discontent, fostered the growth of persistent disparagement until praise or commendation is with them almost an impossibility, they wake up at last to find themselves isolated, avoided, left solitary, amid the dreary ruins of a life that their own hand has so greatly helped to wreck.

A foolish family pride lies at the root of many a grief. A child has erred perhaps, erred madly, wickedly; we long to forgive—to take back the weak, the unstable, the repentant sinner; we *know* that in such forgiveness lies our own only chance of peace of mind, of happiness, as well as his only, or, at anyrate, his best chance of reformation, of rehabilitation. But—‘He has disgraced the family,’ and our pride and vanity revolt equally with our virtue at the idea of reinstating the erring one. And thus the evil that might have been single and transitory becomes permanent—permanent as our grief—a grief tinged with remorse not undeservedly, in that we have, under whatever name we may disguise it, preferred to pamper our pride—to courageously holding out openly a helping hand to the foolish, dejected, hopeless backslider.

We may reckon on our fingers the friends who would stand by us in grief, in poverty, in sick-

ness; we are fortunate indeed if we can securely reckon on one who will stand by us in the greatest grief of all, in shame, in disgrace. And yet it is all but impossible for us to be acquainted with the causes of the career which have led to the catastrophe on which we so glibly pronounce judgment.

The very possible ill management of parents, the probable temptations, are all, or almost all, hidden from us. Yet we immaculate vases look down from under our glass shades with a scarcely justifiable self-satisfaction on the poor little pitcher that has been carried once too often to the well. Dante puts into the mouth of Francesca the oft-quoted saying that there is no grief so deep as that of remembering happier days in present distress. But that is so only when, as in Francesca's case, it is remorse that is speaking. She sorrowed, and sorrowed justly, for the happy, honourable days before that one on which ‘they read no more.’ But let the happiness that once was ours be untinctured by remorse, by self-reproach, and be our present horizon ever so gloomy, memory will send a twilight glow from the past into our minds; and we say, and say truly, that ‘it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.’

In like manner, those who have lost a fortune may console themselves that at least they have had a fortune to lose. Many there are who have never even seen ‘better days.’ And supposing what the world calls good fortune to have continued uninterrupted—supposing we have never lapsed from the small circle of self-satisfied prosperity, it is possible that this, too, might constitute a misfortune in itself, by fostering our egotism, dulling our imaginations, narrowing our sympathies.

It is inexperience, or feebleness of insight, that makes us look at life as a child at a statue: so round, so smooth, soft surely, and responsive. But when we touch it, we *feel* how cold and hard and insensate is the marble of which it is composed; yet, having learned certain truths and limitations respecting it, and having got, as it were, to the right stand-point, the marble regains somewhat of the fascination of its old smooth beauty.

We learn to manage our griefs, so to speak; we recall the great and wise sayings uttered of old by the great and wise to comfort and aid their brethren in adversity. If we cannot forget our sorrows, we learn to occupy our minds with other things. True, they are our very own—our dear-bought possession. Any accident may deprive us of our joys, but our sorrows are at least our own. Yet is it not wise to dwell wholly on our grief freehold: we must pass the boundaries, venture upon higher ground, become acquainted with the mode in which our neighbours cultivate their domains, acknowledge them to be perhaps even wider than our own—put to better uses, made more profitable by better husbandry. It is a poor pride that makes us shrink from learning a lesson from others’ management of their ‘heritage of woe.’

What, beyond sympathy, may we reckon as a fruit of the inheritance in which we all share? For one thing, a knowledge of ourselves. Until the storm came and tested us, we neither knew

how frail nor how strong we were. For another—if it has been allowed its dues, it has begot a fortitude and a preparedness in us; a resolve and a readiness if need be to suffer; and lastly, a great peace, in that we have done with sickly uncertainties, vain hopes, selfish longings; and leaning on the strengthening arm of our grief, we can smile alike at the blandishments or frowns of a blind or fickle Fortune.

BLOOD ROYAL.*

CHAPTER X.—MR PLANTAGENET LIVES AGAIN.

OUTSIDE college that same afternoon, Trevor Gillingham in a loud check suit lounged lazily by the big front gate—on the prowl, as he phrased it himself, for an agreeable companion. For the Born Poet was by nature a gregarious animal, and hated to do anything alone, if a comrade could be found for him. But being a person of expansive mind, ever ready to pick up hints from all and sundry, he preferred to hook himself on by pure chance to the first stray comer, a process which contributed an agreeable dramatic variety to the course of his acquaintanceships. He loved deliberately to survey the kaleidoscope of life and to try it anew in ever-varying combinations.

Now the first man who emerged from the big gate that afternoon happened, as luck would have it, to be Richard Plantagenet in his striped college blazer, on his way to the barges. Gillingham took his arm at once as if they were boon companions. ‘Are you engaged this afternoon?’ he inquired with quite friendly interest. ‘Because, if not, I should so much like the advantage of your advice and assistance. My governor’s coming up next week for a few days to Oxford, and he wants some rooms—nice rooms to entertain in. He won’t go to the *Randolph*—*banal*, very, don’t you know—because he’ll want to see friends a good deal: he’s convivial, the governor; and he’d like a place where they’d be able to cook a decent dinner. Now, Edward Street would do, I should think. First-rate rooms in Edward Street. Can you come round and help me?’

He said it with an amount of *empressement* that was really flattering. Now Dick had nothing particular to do that afternoon, though he had been bound for the river: but he always liked a stroll with that brilliant Gillingham, whom he had never ceased to admire as a creature from another social sphere, a cross between Lord Byron and the Admirable Crichton. So he put off his row, and walked round to Edward Street, the most fashionable quarter for high-class lodgings to be found in Oxford. Sir Bernard, it seemed, had just returned to England for a few short weeks from his Roumanian mission, and was anxious to get decent rooms, his son said, ‘the sort of rooms, don’t you know, where one can dine one’s women folk, for he knows all the dons’ families.’ They looked at half-a-dozen sets, all in the best houses, and Gillingham finally selected a suite at ten guineas. Dick opened his eyes with astonishment at that lordly figure: he never really knew till

then one could pay so much for lodgings. But he concealed his surprise from the Born Poet, his own pride having early taught him that great lesson in life of *nil admirari*, which is far more necessary to social salvation in snob-ridden England than ever it could have been in the Rome of the Caesars.

On their way back to college, after a stroll round the meadows, they met a very small telegraph boy at the doors of Durham. ‘Message for you, sir,’ the porter said, touching his hat to Dick; and in great doubt and trepidation, for to him a telegram was a most rare event, Dick took it and opened it.

His face flushed crimson as he read the contents; but he saw in a second the only way out of it was to put the best face on things. ‘Why, my father’s coming up too,’ he said, turning round to Gillingham. ‘He’ll arrive to-morrow. I—I must go this moment and hunt up some rooms for him. My sister doesn’t say by what train he’s coming; but he evidently means to stay, from what she tells me.’

‘One good turn deserves another,’ Gillingham drawled out carelessly. ‘I don’t mind going round with you and having another hunt. I should think that second set we saw round the corner would just about suit him.’

The second set had been rated at seven guineas a week. Dick was weak enough to colour again. ‘Oh no,’ he answered hurriedly. ‘I—I’d prefer to go alone. Of course I shall want some much cheaper place than that. I think I can get the kind of thing I require in Grove Street.’

‘As you will,’ Gillingham answered lightly, nodding a brisk farewell, and turning back into quad. ‘Far be it from me to inflict my company unwillingly on any gentleman anywhere. I’m all for Auberon Herbert and pure individualism.—I say, you Faussett: here’s a game,’ and he walked mysteriously round the corner by the Wardens’ Lodgings. He dropped his voice to a whisper: ‘The Head of the Plantagenets is coming up to-morrow to visit the Prince of the Blood: fact: I give you my word for it. So we’ll have an opportunity at last of finding out who the dickens the fellow is, and where on earth he inherited the proud name of Plantagenet from.’

‘There were some Plantagenets at Leeds—no; I think it was Sheffield,’ Faussett put in, trying to remember. ‘Somebody was saying to me the other day this man might be related to them. The family’s extinct, and left a lot of money.’

‘Then they can’t have anything to do with our Prince of the Blood,’ Gillingham answered carelessly; ‘for he isn’t a bit extinct, but alive and kicking: and he hasn’t got a crooked sixpence in the world to bless himself with. He lives on cold tea and Huntley and Palmer’s biscuits. But he’s not a bad sort, either, when you come to know him; but you’ve got to know him first, as the poet observes: and he’s really a fearful swell at the history of the Plantagenets.’

Dick passed a troubled night. Terrible possibilities loomed vague before him. Next day, he was down at the first two trains by which he thought it at all possible his father might arrive; and his vigilance was rewarded by finding Mr Plantagenet delivered by the second. The Head of the House was considerably surprised and not

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a little disappointed when he saw his son and heir awaiting him on the platform. 'What, you here, Dick?' he cried. 'Why, I wanted to surprise you. I intended to take my modest room for the night at the same hotel at which you stopped—the *Saracen's Head*, if I recollect the name aright—and then to drop in upon you quite unexpectedly about lunch-time.'

'Maud telegraphed to me that you were coming, father,' Dick answered, taking his hand, it must be acknowledged, a trifle less warmly than filial feeling might have dictated. Then his face grew fiery red. 'But I've engaged rooms for you,' he went on, 'not at an inn, on purpose. I hope, father, for your own sake, as well as for mine, while you're here in Oxford, you won't even so much as enter one.'

It was a hard thing to have to say; but for very shame's sake, Dick felt he must muster up courage to say it. As for Mr Plantagenet himself, poor old sot that he was, a touch of manly pride brought the colour just for once to his own swollen cheek. 'I hope, Richard,' he said, drawing himself up very erect, for he had a fine carriage still, in spite of all his degradations—'I hope I have sufficient sense of what becomes a gentleman, in a society of gentlemen, to think of doing anything that would disgrace myself, or disgrace my son, or disgrace my name, or my literary reputation—which must be well known to many students of English literature in this university—by any unbecoming act of any description. And I take it hardly, Richard, that my eldest son, for whom I have made such sacrifices—Mr Plantagenet had used that phrase so often already in the parlour of the *White Horse* that he had almost come by this time to believe himself there was really some truth in it—should greet me with such marked distrust on the very outset of a visit to which I had looked forward with so much pride and pleasure.'

It was quite a dignified speech, for Mr Plantagenet. Dick's heart was touched by it. 'I beg your pardon, father,' he replied in a very low tone. 'I'm sorry if I've hurt you. But I meant no rudeness. I've engaged pleasant lodgings for you in a very nice street, and I'm sure I'll do everything in my power to make your visit a happy one.' As he spoke, he almost believed his father would rise for once to the height of the circumstances, and behave himself circumspectly with decorum and dignity during his few days at Oxford.

To do Mr Plantagenet justice, indeed, he tried very hard to keep straight for once, and during all his stay, he never even entered the doors of an hotel or public-house. Nay, more; in Dick's own rooms, as Dick noticed with pleasure, he was circumspect in his drinking; it flattered his vanity and his social pretensions to be introduced to his son's friends and to walk at his ease through the grounds of the college. Once more for a day or two Edmund Plantagenet felt himself a gentleman among gentlemen. Dick kept as close to him as possible, except at lecture hours; and then, as far as he could, he handed him over to the friendly care of Gillespie, who mounted guard in turn, and seemed to enter silently into the spirit of the situation. As much as possible, on the other hand, Dick avoided for those days Gillingham and Faussett's set, whose

only one wish, he felt sure, would be to draw his father into wild talk about the Plantagenet pedigree—a subject which Dick himself, in spite of his profound faith, had the good sense to keep always most sedulously in the background.

For the first three days, Dick was enabled to write nightly and report to Maud that so far all went well and there were no signs of a catastrophe. But on the fourth day, as ill-luck would have it, Gillingham came round to Faussett's rooms full of a chance discovery he had that moment lighted upon. 'Why, who'd ever believe it?' he cried, all agog. 'This man Plantagenet, who's come up to see his son, the Prince of the Blood, is a decayed writer, a man of letters of the Alaric Watts and Leigh Hunt period, not unheard of in his day as an inflated essayist. I know a lot of his stuff by heart—Huzlitt-and-water sort of style; De Quincey gone mad, with a touch of Bulwer: learned it when I was a boy, and we lived at Constantinople. He's the man who used to gush under the name of Barry Neville!'

'How did you find it out?' Faussett inquired, all eagerness.

'Why, I happened to turn out a Dictionary of Pseudonyms at the Union just now, in search of somebody else; and there the name Plantagenet caught my eye by chance: so of course I read, and, looking closer, I found this fact about the old man and his origin. It's extremely interesting. So, to make quite sure, I boarded Plantagenet five minutes ago with the point-blank question. "Hullo, Prince," said I, "I see your father's Barry Neville the writer." He coloured up to his eyes, as he does—it's a charming girlish trick of his; but he admitted the impeachment. There: he's crossing the quad now. I wonder what the dickens he's done with his governor!'

'I'll run up to his rooms and see,' Faussett answered, laughing. 'He keeps the old fellow pretty close—in cotton wool, so to speak. Won't trust him out alone, and sets Gillespie to watch him. But an Exeter man tells me he's seen the same figure down at a place called Chiddington, where he lives, in Surrey: and according to him, he's a rare old buffer. I'll go and make his acquaintance, now His R'yal Highness has gone off unattended to lecture: we'll have some sport out of him.' And he disappeared, brimming over, up the steps of the New Buildings.

All that afternoon, in fact, Richard noticed for himself that some change had come over his father's spirit. Mr Plantagenet was more silent, and yet even more grandiose and regal than ever. He hadn't been drinking, thank Heaven; not quite so bad as that, for Dick knew only too well the signs of drink in his father's face and his father's actions: but he had altered in demeanour, somehow, and was puffed up with personal dignity even more markedly than usual. He sat in and talked a great deal about the grand days of his youth; and he dwelt so much upon the past glories of Lady Postlethwaite's *salon* and the people he used to meet there that Dick began to wonder what on earth it portended.

'You'll come round to my rooms, father, after Hall?' he asked at last, as Mr Plantagenet rose

to leave just before evening chapel. 'Gillespie'll be here, and one or two other fellows.'

Mr Plantagenet smiled dubiously. 'No, no, my boy,' he answered, in his lightest and airiest manner. 'You must excuse me. This evening, you must really excuse me. To tell you the truth, Richard—with profound importance—I have an engagement elsewhere.'

'An engagement, father! You have an engagement! And in Oxford, too,' Dick faltered out. 'Why, how on earth can you have managed to pick up an engagement?'

Mr Plantagenet drew himself up as he was wont to do for the beginning of a quadrille, and assuming an air of offended dignity, replied with much hauteur: 'I am not in the habit, Richard, of accounting for my engagements, good, bad, or indifferent, to my own children. I am of age, I fancy. Finding myself here at Oxford in a congenial society—in the society to which I may venture to say I was brought up, and of which but for unfortunate circumstances, I ought always to have made a brilliant member—finding myself here in my natural surroundings, I repeat, I have of course *picked up*, as you coarsely put it, a few private acquaintances on my own account. I'm not so entirely dependent, as you suppose, upon you, Richard, for my introduction to Oxford society. My own personal qualities and characteristics, I hope, go a little way at least towards securing me respect and consideration in whatever social surroundings I may happen to be mixing.' And Mr Plantagenet shook out a clean white cambric pocket-handkerchief ostentatiously, to wipe his eyes, in which a slight dew was supposed to have insensibly collected at the thought of Richard's unflinching depreciation of his qualities and opportunities.

'I'm sorry I've offended you, father,' Dick answered hastily. 'I'm sure I didn't mean to. But I do hope—I do hope, if you'll allow me to say so, you're not going round to spend the evening—at any other undergraduate's rooms—not at Gillingham's or Faussett's.'

Mr Plantagenet shuffled uneasily: in point of fact, he looked very much as he had been wont to look in days gone by when the landlady at the *White Horse* inquired of him now and again how soon he intended to settle his little account for brandy and sodas. 'I choose my own acquaintances, Richard,' he answered with as much dignity as he could easily command. 'I don't permit myself to be dictated to in matters like this by my own children. Your neighbour Mr Faussett appears to me a very intelligent and gentlemanly young man: a young man such as I was accustomed to associate with, myself, in my own early days, before I married your poor dear mother: not like *your* set, Richard, who are far from being what I myself consider thoroughly gentlemanly. Mere professional young men, *your* set, my dear boy: very worthy, no doubt, and hard-working, and respectable, like this excellent Gillespie: but not with that *cachet*, that indefinable something, that invisible hallmark of true blood and breeding, that I observe with pleasure in your neighbour Faussett. It's not your fault, my poor boy: I recognise freely that it's not your fault. You take after your mother. She's a dear good soul, your mother'—pocket-handkerchief lightly applied again—

'but she's not a Plantagenet, Richard: she's not a Plantagenet.' And with this parting shot neatly delivered point-blank at Dick's crimson face, the offended father sailed majestically out of the room and strode down the staircase.

Dick's cheek was hot and red with mingled pride and annoyance; but he answered nothing. Far be it from him to correct or rebuke by word or deed the living head of the house of Plantagenet.

'I hope to God,' he thought to himself, piteously, 'Faussett hasn't asked him on purpose to try and make an exhibition of him. But what on earth else can he have wanted to ask him for, I wonder?'

At that very same moment Faussett was stopping Trevor Gillingham in the Chapel Quad with a characteristic invitation for a wine-party that evening. 'Drop in and have a glass of claret with me after Hall, Gillingham,' he said, laughing. 'I've got a guest coming to-night. I've asked Plantagenet's father round to my rooms at eight. He'll be in splendid form. He's awfully amusing when he talks at his ease, I'm told. Do come and give us one of your rousing recitations. I want to make things as lively as I can, you know.'

Gillingham smiled the tolerant smile of the Born Poet. 'All right, my dear boy,' he answered. 'I'll come. It'll be stock-in-trade to me, no doubt, for an unborn drama. Though Plantagenet's not half a bad sort of fellow, after all, when you come to know him, in spite of his mugging. Still, I'll come, and look on: an experience, of course, is always an experience. The poet's life must necessarily be made up of infinite experiences. Do you think Shakespeare always kept to the beaten path of humanity? A poet can't afford it. He must see some good—of a sort—in everything; for he must see in it at least material for a tragedy or a comedy.' With which comfortable assurance to salve his poetical conscience, the Born Bard strolled off, in cap and gown, with an easy lounging gait, to evening chapel.

THE MOTHER OF NAPOLEON.

LETITIA RAMOLINI, the Mother of Napoleon Bonaparte, was born at Ajaccio on the 24th of August 1750. She was celebrated throughout the island of Corsica for her beauty, and was married to Charles Bonaparte before she had completed her sixteenth year.

The picturesque island of Corsica was formerly a province of Italy, and was Italian in its language, sympathies, and customs. In the year 1767 it was invaded by a French army, and, after several conflicts, its inhabitants were forced to yield to superior numbers, and Corsica was annexed to the empire of the Bourbons. At the time of the French invasion, Charles Bonaparte, a handsome lawyer, of vigorous intellect and of Italian extraction, abandoned the profession of the law for the sword, and united with his countrymen, under General Paoli, in their endeavours to resist the invaders. He and Letitia had then one child, Joseph; and the young wife

accompanied her husband on horseback in his dangerous journeys, and rode by his side and shared all the perils by which they were surrounded. High-spirited and brave, with a strong will, the beautiful young woman appears to have set an example of almost Spartan endurance.

Eight weeks after the island had been transferred to the dominion of France, Napoleon was born at Ajaccio, on the 15th August 1769. Singularly enough, considering the future that lay before him, his birth took place under a canopy of tapestry representing the heroes of the *Iliad*.

Letitia's husband died not many years after the birth of Napoleon. He is said to have appreciated his son's powers, which even then were remarkable. Madame Bonaparte was left a widow at the age of thirty-five, with eight children, five sons and three daughters. In her husband's lifetime, before their troubles came, she had been a wealthy woman, but now her means were limited. She retired with her children to her country home, a residence approached by an avenue overarched by lofty trees and bordered by flowering shrubs. A smooth snug lawn was a pleasant playground for the 'embryo kings and queens' who called Letitia mother. Napoleon afterwards repeatedly declared that the family were entirely indebted to her for that physical, intellectual, and moral training which prepared them to rise to the summits of power to which they afterwards attained. He often said: 'My opinion is, that the future of a child for good or evil depends entirely upon its mother.'

Speaking of the death of an uncle upon whom the children were partly dependent, and of his mother's life in her early widowhood, Napoleon said: 'He [the uncle] then made us draw near, and gave us his blessing and advice. "You are the eldest of the family," he said to Joseph, "but Napoleon is the head of it. Take care to remember what I say to you." He then expired, amidst the sobs and tears which this melancholy sight drew from us. Left without guide, without support, my mother was obliged to take the direction of affairs upon herself. But the task was not above her strength. She managed everything, provided for everything with a providence which could neither be expected from her sex nor from her age. Ah! what a woman! Where shall we look for her equal? She watched over us with a solicitude unexampled. Every low sentiment, every ungenerous affection, was discouraged and discarded. She suffered nothing but that which was grand and elevated to take root in our youthful understandings. She abhorred falsehood, and would not tolerate the slightest act of disobedience. None of our faults were overlooked. Losses, privations, fatigue, had no effect upon her. She endured all, braved all. She had the energy of a man, combined with the gentleness and delicacy of a woman.'

Abbott tells the following anecdote, which shows how firm was the rule of the good, high-minded mother. 'A bachelor uncle owned the rural

retreat where the family resided. He was very wealthy, but very parsimonious. The young Bonapartes, though living in the abundant enjoyments of all the necessities of life, could obtain but little money for the purchase of those thousand little conveniences and luxuries which every boy covets. Whenever they ventured to ask their uncle for coppers, he invariably pleaded poverty, assuring them that though he had lands and vineyards, goats and poultry, he had no money. At last the boys discovered a bag of doublets secreted upon a shelf. They formed a conspiracy, and by the aid of Pauline, who was too young to understand the share which she had in the mischief, they contrived, on a certain occasion when the uncle was pleading poverty, to draw down the bag, and the glittering gold rolled over the floor. The boys burst into shouts of laughter, while the good old man was almost choked with indignation. Just at that moment Madame Bonaparte came in. Her presence immediately silenced the merriment. She severely reprimanded her sons for their improper behaviour, and ordered them to collect again the scattered doublets.'

Napoleon was not an amiable child; he was silent and retiring in disposition; melancholy, too, and impatient of restraint. Many years afterwards, an isolated granite rock of wild and rugged form, within which was something resembling a cage, in the grounds of his early home, was pointed out as having been his favourite resort as a child, and it still bore the name of 'Napoleon's Grotto.' There, whilst his brothers and sisters were at play, he would recline for hours, book in hand, looking out upon the broad expanse of the Mediterranean, and on the blue sky overhead. At other times, his favourite plaything was a small brass cannon, weighing about thirty pounds. He delighted to hear its loud report, and to imagine he saw whole squadrons mown down by its discharges.

Abbott says the little boy 'loved to hear from his mother's lips the story of her hardships and sufferings, as, with her husband and the vanquished Corsicans, she fled from village to village, and from fastness to fastness, before their conquering enemies. The mother was probably but little aware of the warlike spirit she was thus nurturing in the bosom of her son; but with her own high mental endowments, she could not be insensible to the extraordinary capacities which had been conferred upon the silent, thoughtful, pensive listener.'

When Napoleon was about ten years of age, Count Marboeuf obtained admission for him to the Military School at Brienne, near Paris. Forty years afterwards, Napoleon observed that he should never forget the pang he felt when parting with his mother. Stoic as he was already, his stoicism forsook him, and he wept like any other child. He remained at this school five years, during which his holidays were spent at Corsica; then he was promoted to the Military School at Paris. Afterwards he entered the army, and there his upward progress was rapid.

During the disturbances which took place in the island of Corsica in the year 1793, Napoleon happened to be on a visit to his mother; and when Paoli—dissatisfied with the excesses of the

French Convention, under which he then ruled the island—determined to surrender Corsica to the English, the Bonaparte family became head of the French party. Napoleon had tried all his powers of persuasion to induce the old friend who had been his hero in more youthful days to adopt a different line of conduct, but in vain. Paoli, the veteran General, was eighty years of age; and being firmly convinced that he was right in his determination, it was not likely that he would yield to Napoleon, who was then only twenty-four. The friends parted sorrowfully, and civil war began. Paoli's side soon became the stronger, as increasing numbers of English flocked to his standard. Napoleon saw that it was useless to attempt further resistance, and that he and his family could no longer reside safely in Corsica. Sorrowfully he disbanded his forces and prepared to leave the island.

Paoli called upon Madame Bonaparte, and endeavoured to persuade her to induce her family to join him in the treasonable surrender of the island to the English, urging that resistance was hopeless, and, by perverse opposition, she was bringing irreparable ruin and misery on herself and family; upon which Napoleon's mother rejoined: 'I know of but two laws which it is necessary for me to obey—the laws of honour and of duty.' A decree was immediately passed that the family must be banished from Corsica.

One morning Napoleon hurried to inform his mother that several thousand peasants were coming to attack the house. Hastily seizing such articles of property as they could take with them, the family fled precipitately, and for several days wandered, homeless and destitute, about the sea-shore, until Napoleon could make arrangements for their embarkation. Their house was sacked by the mob and their furniture destroyed.

It was a touching scene when at midnight an open boat, manned by four strong rowers, approached the shore near Madame Bonaparte's plundered dwelling, and, whilst an attendant held a lantern, the poor exiled family sorrowfully and in silence entered the boat. A few trunks and bandboxes contained all their available property. The oarsmen pulled out into the dark and lonely sea. 'Earthly boat,' says Abbott, 'never before held such a band of emigrants. Little did those poor and friendless fugitives then imagine that all the thrones of Europe were to tremble before them, and that their celebrity was to fill the world.' And in the flight, as henceforward in their lives, Napoleon was the commanding spirit.

Madame Bonaparte first settled at Nice, and afterwards at Marseilles, where she and her family resided in much pecuniary embarrassment until relieved by Napoleon's rising fortunes.

When the new government of France, called the Directory, was established, Napoleon, unanimously applauded for having saved the Republic by his energy, was appointed Commander-in-chief of the Army of the Interior. He was then only twenty-five; and he had, by the force of his genius and the extraordinary exertions he had made, attained to a very elevated position in the eyes of the French nation.

His first step spoke well for his filial devotion. The historian above quoted says: 'Immediately

upon the attainment of this high dignity and authority, with the ample pecuniary resources accompanying it, Napoleon hastened to Marseilles to place his mother in a position of perfect comfort. And he continued to watch over her with most filial assiduity, proving himself an affectionate and dutiful son. From this hour the whole family, mother, brothers, and sisters, were taken under his protection, and all their interests blended with his own.'

At the age of twenty-six, Napoleon was placed by those in command at the head of the Italian army. There, in the midst of many temptations, he appears to have pursued, as he himself said, 'a line of conduct in the highest degree irreproachable and exemplary. In spotless morality I was a Cato, and must have appeared so to all. I was a philosopher and a sage. My supremacy could only be retained by proving myself a better man than any other man in the army. Had I yielded to human weaknesses, I should have lost my power.' Abbott says that Napoleon at that time was temperate in the extreme, seldom allowing himself to take even a glass of wine, and never countenancing by his presence any scene of bacchanalian revelry. 'For gaming in all its branches he manifested then and through the whole of his life the strongest disapproval. From what source did the young soldier imbibe these elevated principles? Napoleon informs us that to his mother he was indebted for every pure and noble sentiment which inspired his bosom.'

Public attention does not seem to have been directed towards Napoleon's mother until her son was proclaimed Emperor in 1804. She then received the title of Madame Mère, and an income of a million francs was settled upon her. And that she might have a position of political importance, she was made Protectrice-Générale of all the charitable institutions of France. Such an office admirably suited her. She frequently solicited favours of her son for others, and was happy whenever her exertions met with success. On one occasion, upon learning of the arrest of the Duke d'Enghien, she even threw herself upon her knees before Napoleon, imploring mercy for the unfortunate Prince. In her tender anxiety, she thus laid aside that habitual dignity which the following incident illustrates. Soon after Napoleon's assumption of the imperial purple he chanced to meet his mother in the gardens of St-Cloud. He was surrounded by courtiers, and half playfully held out his hand for her to kiss. 'Not so, my son,' she gravely replied, at the same time presenting her hand in return; 'it is your duty to kiss the hand of her who gave you life.'

After this, it seems a pity that truthfulness must make us say that even this great woman had one littleness, if we may call it so, of character. She evinced sometimes a resemblance to the brother, whose parsimony her sons had resented in their childhood, by showing a love of economising, even upon trifling occasions. This proved a source of frequent amusement amongst the gay circles of Paris. The Emperor himself was sometimes a little scandalised at her actions, although this did not hinder him from most highly respecting her character.

Mrs. Ellis says: 'Many curious instances are recorded of Madame Letitia's love of hoarding;

for which, however, she had, or thought she had, her own sufficient reasons. Indeed, it is impossible to calculate the effect to which her own mind may have been early impressed by circumstances with the convictions of the uncertainty of that success which her sons had so unexpectedly attained. To the mother who had watched over their deserted childhood—who had learned in her widowed state what it was to have scarcely any human friend on whom she could depend for advancing her sons in the career of worldly distinction; and who, with her young family around her, had experienced all the anxieties of being driven from her native country and cast upon a world of strangers—to her there must have appeared but an uncertain foundation for confidence in the sudden and unprecedented exaltation of her sons. And then, "if reverses should come," who can wonder, with this experience so deeply impressed upon her memory, that her imagination should have been haunted with apprehensions, which in their mode of exhibition appeared, to those who were but superficial observers, something like the manifestations of an amusing kind of mental aberration. Under these impressions she is said to have replied to those who remonstrated with her for her parsimony: "Who knows but I may one day have to provide bread for all these kings!"

Mrs Ellis goes on to say: "But this peculiarity of Madame Letitia's can the more easily be forgiven when it is remembered how faithful and unceasing were the efforts she employed for serving the interests of her sons; and especially how liberal were her offers of assistance when the tide of fortune had set against them. When all her sons except one were seated on thrones, she was unceasing in her applications to the most powerful of them on behalf of Lucien. On being one day told by Napoleon that she loved Lucien more than she did the rest of her family—"The child," she replied, "of whom I am the most fond is always the one that happens to be the most unfortunate."

Madame Mère is said by one who saw her late in life to have been then a pale, earnest-looking woman, who, after speaking of anything which interested her much, sat with compressed lips and wide open eyes, an image of firmness of purpose combined with depth of feeling. At other times, "her soul beamed in her looks, and it was a soul full of the loftiest sentiments." The same writer (the Duchesse d'Abbrantès) thus describes her at another period: "The revolution of the 8th was completed, and Paris was no longer agitated. We went to see Madame Letitia Bonaparte, who then lived with Joseph. She appeared calm, though far from being at ease, for her extreme paleness, and the convulsive movements she evinced whenever an unexpected noise met her ear, gave her features a ghastly look. In these moments she appeared to me truly like the mother of the Gracchi. And her situation gave force to the idea; she had perhaps more at stake than that famous Roman matron."

It was only natural that the tenderness of such a mother should have been nobly shown to her son when reverses came upon him and his wonderful fortunes changed. She, who always thought most tenderly and with the greatest love of that one of her children who was in adversity,

followed the banished Emperor to Elba, and, with a few attendants, took up her residence there. Mrs Ellis says: "From the earliest period of his reverses, the mother's heart with all its warmest affections became especially centred in the son. She had often reproved him for his pride and ambition in the days of his prosperity, and at that time she was perhaps the only friend in existence from whose lips he had heard the truth; but from the time of his overthrow at Waterloo to the day of his death, her true woman's heart never swerved from this one object of all her deepest and most absorbing interests. Again and again she offered him all that she possessed in the world, to assist in the re-establishment of his affairs. "For me," said Napoleon, in his last exile, when memories of the past so often filled his mind, "my mother would without a murmur have doomed herself to live on brown bread. Loftiness of sentiment still reigned paramount in her breast; pride and noble ambition were not yet subdued by avarice."

This brave, devoted woman also thus appealed to the allied sovereigns at Aix-la-Chapelle on his behalf: "Sires, I am a mother, and my son's life is dearer to me than my own. In the name of Him whose essence is goodness, and of whom your Imperial and Royal Majesties are the image, I entreat you to put a period to his misery, and to restore him to liberty. For this I implore God, and I implore you, who are his vice-gerents on earth. Reasons of state have their limits; and posterity, which gives immortality, adores above all things the generosity of conquerors."

Again, in 1819, Napoleon's mother cheerfully defrayed the expenses of sending to St Helena qualified persons, selected by her brother, Cardinal Fesch, with the approval of the Pope, to minister to the body and soul of her unhappy son. She herself outlived her illustrious son, dying when nearly eighty years of age, and retaining to the last much of her beauty of person and extraordinary vigour of mind.

BABY JOHN.*

CHAPTER V.—GOOD-BYE.

"Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark
Our coming, and look brighter when we come.

BYRON.

"HE'S coming here to-morrow!" It was the end of May, and Baby John Craddock was close on three months old, and Alice and Lucy were seriously considering the necessity of short-coating him. "A great, big, fat boy, growing out of all his clothes shameful!"

Life had run on so brightly and smoothly, that it had seemed as if it might run on the same for ever, and Alice had ceased to talk of going back to the mill, or Lucy to be on the lookout to stop her from doing so. But here, all of a sudden, a cloud appeared which threatened to darken the brightness of their day—a rock which might turn the peaceful sunny stream into new ways, stony and troubled.

'He's coming here to-morrow!'

'To fetch you home?'

'No, he don't say so.' Lucy went reading on; writing was not very easy for her to decipher, and her husband's hand was especially difficult to her.

Alice was giving Baby John his bottle, so did not pay much attention, till she heard Lucy give a cry of surprise and rather awe-stricken delight.

'What is it?'

'Oh, Alice, what do you think? As far as I can make out, he's got to go to America for six months on business, and he wants to know if I'd like to stop on here with you while he's gone? Here, just you take the letter and see what you make of it, and give me baby.'

Yes; there was no mistake about it. Alice spelt it out to the same effect. Mr Craddock was obliged to go to America on important business, which might take him as long as six months. During his absence he was going to leave the mill under the care of a cousin of his, and he asked if Lucy would prefer to return to Felsby or remain at Beston, or— There was evidently another alternative in his mind, but the second 'or' had been scratched out, as if it were not worth while to suggest it.

Alice sat for a minute or two with her eyes fixed on that scratched-out 'or', and when she looked up, there was an absent look on Lucy's face, as if she, too, were pondering something; and she caught the baby up in her arms and held it tightly against her breast, thereby interfering with that individual's enjoyment of the pipe of peace—in his case represented by his bottle—and producing a squall of remonstrance.

'What was he going to say there?' Alice asked, pointing to the scratched-out word.

'I don't know. What could one do except go back to Felsby or stop here? And of course, of course, of course we'll stay here, all through the summer! Six whole lovely months—June, July, August, September, October, November.' Lucy reckoned them off on the fat little fingers of Baby John, which were more generally used to illustrate 'This little pig went to market.'

'It's a long time,' Alice said, 'and'—

'Lovely and long!' Lucy interrupted. 'Why, Alice, I don't believe you're half as pleased as I am. You're tired of me and baby, and the sea, and the flowers, and want to go back to nasty, smoky, old Felsby!'

Alice felt that it was not really worth while to contradict such a ridiculous accusation as this, but she was strangely silent and thoughtful all that day; and Lucy, too, though she kept up rattling talk, and planned what they would do, would drop now and then into a wistful, uneasy silence, and her laughter and gaiety had a strained effect, as if they were not altogether natural.

Mr Craddock had not said what time he would arrive, so the girls began expecting him at the very earliest hour in the morning, not reckoning

that this would have necessitated his leaving Felsby about midnight. They could neither of them eat any breakfast, and they started at the slightest sound, thinking it was his arrival.

Except in the matter of extra care in the appearance of Baby John, Lucy refused to make any preparations for her husband's visit, and did not even tell Mrs Tripp he was coming.

'He'll hide the night, won't he?' Alice asked. 'There's a room in next door that I know I can have for the night, so don't think about me. I know how to make myself scarce, and I'll go right off when I see him coming, so as you can be all to yourselves.'

But Lucy would not hear of such a thing. 'If he bides the night, he can just go to the *Seaview*, and he'll dine there, so don't bother your head about getting anything extra in. He'd think this a horrid, pokey, little place, and baby'd worry him, and he'd a lot rather be by himself, and Mrs Tripp's cooking's well enough for us, but it wouldn't suit him.'

'Do he think a deal of what he eats and drinks?'

'Oh no, he ain't that sort at all, he's easily pleased; but there! he's used to having things nice, and I don't care that he should be put about more than I can help along of me.'

He did not actually arrive till the afternoon, and as soon as he came, Alice slipped away, and went for a long walk along the cliffs, hardly noticing all the beautiful colours on the sea, or the vivid green of the new springing grass on the downs, so full was her heart of Lucy and Baby John, and Baby John's father.

She did not come back till nearly seven, and then was planning a visit to a rheumatic old fisherman, whose acquaintance they had made on the beach, so as not to intrude on the privacy of the husband and wife. But before she reached Beston, she met Lucy with the baby in her arms coming out to meet her.

'Why, wherever have you been? I knew you was coming this way, and I've been waiting about for more than an hour, thinking you were bound to be back soon. And you've tired yourself to death. No, you shan't carry baby; you look as if you could hardly carry yourself, and you ain't had no tea. I gave baby his before I started out, and had a cup myself; but I told Mrs Tripp to have the kettle on, as you'd be sure to be in soon, and we'd all have tea together.'

'He didn't stop long, then?'

'No, I could have told you he wouldn't before he came. He's gone to the *Seaview* to have his dinner, and he won't trouble to come in again this evening, for I told him we was early going to bed; but perhaps he may look in to-morrow before he starts.'

'He's going to-morrow?'

'Yes, he's off to America next week; so, of course, he's terrible busy settling everything before he goes.'

'Did he think baby growed?'

'He didn't take much notice of him. He just poked his cheek with his middle finger—don't you know how men do? and he said he was very small, as if he weren't a big, fine boy for his age.'

'What did he say about the name? Were he pleased?'

'Oh, there ! I don't know. I told him as I'd called him after my father, and he didn't make no remark.'

'Did he say anything?—'

'No, not a word. I knew he'd not think of such a thing.'

Neither of the girls had ever said a word to one another of what had been in their minds since Mr Craddock's letter came the day before, which was that the other alternative was for Lucy to go with him to America ; and yet Lucy understood Alice's question before it was finished, and Alice understood the answer, vague as it was.

They had to pass the *Seaview* to reach their lodgings. The season at Beston, as I have said, had not begun, and the *Seaview*, at the best of times never a very imposing place, had the desolate air of a hotel out of season. Some repairs were being done, and ladders were reared against the front, and the door was in the first stage of painting, when big blotches of vermilion adorn it. In the bow-window of the coffee-room a solitary figure was sitting at dinner with a newspaper propped up on the cruet-stand in front of him, waited on by a dirty-looking maid, as the waiter was only engaged for the season, and the hotel was generally out of gear. The girls hastened their steps as they went by, but he seemed absorbed in his newspaper, and did not notice them.

'Don't he look lonesome?' Alice said, with compunction.

'Oh, he don't mind, bless you ! It's what he's been used to, and he's one of them as likes his own company best.'

At Mrs Tripp's tea was ready on the table, very humble, but clean and cheerful looking, with a little bit of fire lighted, the evenings being chilly, though the days were so warm and bright, and a kettle steaming away on the hob, and the girls' frugal meal spread out on a white cloth, and the baby's bassinet in a warm corner by the fire.

'Don't it look snug?' Lucy said as they came in ; and both of them thought involuntarily of the lonely figure in the *Seaview* coffee-room.

That room made a pretty picture half an hour later to any one standing in the road, for the girls had forgotten to draw down the blind, there were so few passers-by, and the little garden, full of thrift and wall-flower in between, prevented any sense of publicity. The tea-table had been pushed back, and Lucy sat in a low chair in front of the fire, with her sleeves rolled back and a large flannel apron on, on which was Baby John, just out of his bath, kicking and crowing in the delightful freedom from the trammels of clothing. Any woman might have looked beautiful in such circumstances ; even Alice's sharp, little, plain face was glorified almost into loveliness as she knelt in front, doing homage to the young divinity ; but Lucy's young face, with the warm colour in the cheeks, and the hair in soft, curling untidiness, and the big eyes full of mother's love, seemed to some one looking in from the road outside, the sweetest sight possible to imagine.

For there was a looker-on. Mr Craddock had found the mouldy quiet of the *Seaview* inexplicably dreary, and had turned out to smoke, and involuntarily had turned his steps in the direction of Mrs Tripp's. He had no idea of going in ; he

had understood Lucy's hint about their going to bed early ; and yet there was something that made him almost inclined to go—the baby that he had taken so little notice of, and the baby's name, which Lucy had taken such pains to tell him had been given from her father. He felt as if Baby John gave him a claim to a corner in that bright little room, and almost ensured him a welcome.

Perhaps the fixedness of his gaze made itself felt, as I believe a very earnest look will sometimes, for Lucy suddenly became aware that the blind was not drawn down, and she asked Alice to do it.

'I thought there was some one looking in.' And then the blind was drawn down, and Mr Craddock turned away to his hotel.

The girls were at breakfast next morning when the little shabby hotel omnibus pulled up in front of the house (not that it took much pulling to stop the horse, which had been drawing seaweed all the week), and Mr Craddock came into the room before Alice could escape, so she was unwillingly obliged to be present at the parting of husband and wife.

'I've only a minute to spare,' he said, 'before the train, but I thought I'd look in to say good-bye.'

There was almost an apologetic tone in his voice, and Alice—who, it need hardly be said, was heart and soul on Lucy's side, and would have maintained through thick and thin that if there was anything unsatisfactory in the relations between them, it was altogether his fault—now felt a little vexed at Lucy's want of readiness to reply.

'I hope you'll be all right while I'm away,' he went on, his voice getting more business-like. 'I've told George Mills to keep you supplied with money, and if you want more you must let him know, and he'll send you a cheque. He'll be writing to me every week on business, so he'll let me know how you get on, and if you've any message to send he'll forward it. Well, I mustn't stop, or I shall miss the train. Good-bye ! I suppose the baby's asleep, isn't it ?'

Alice would have roused Baby John from the sweetest slumbers, even at the risk of injuring his precious health ; but perhaps that unfortunate 'it' offended his mother's ear, for she only drew back the quilt and showed Baby John's fat cheek deep in the pillow.

'Yes, he generally has a nap after he's dressed of a morning,' she said.

Then there was an awkward pause, and then Mr Craddock turned and held out his hand to Alice. 'I'm glad you'll be able to stop with Lucy and the boy while I'm away,' he said.

And Alice put her little, rough, hard-worked hand into his very heartily. 'I'll see after them both my very best, never you fear !' And she found she had tears in her eyes, and a hard matter to steady her voice.

And then he kissed Lucy and was gone ; and there was the bang of the omnibus door, and the jingle of the harness and crack of the whip, and Alice drew back the curtain to look after it as it moved off.

'Will you have some more tea?' Lucy said, with an immense struggle after composure and indifference, with a trembling hand pouring the

tea into the sugar-basin ; but the next minute Alice was cramming Lucy's hat on her head anyhow, wrong side in front, and pulling and pushing her towards the door.

'Run, run !' she was sobbing out, 'as quick as ever you can go ; the short way behind the *Anchor*, you know ! You'll be in time to catch him if you look sharp !'

'Well,' Alice asked, half an hour later, when Lucy came slowly back in very different style from the wild, breathless rush she had made when she left the house, 'were you in time ?'

Lucy nodded. 'The train was just in, and he looked quite startled to see me, and I were that out of breath I could hardly speak ; but I said as I'd come to see him off and say good-bye. He didn't say much, but I think he were pleased, and I'm glad I went ; but it was all your doing, Alice ; I'd never have gone if it hadn't been for you.'

CHAPTER VI.—A BRIGHT FUTURE.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be ;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me !—WORDSWORTH.

John Craddock thought a great deal of that parting with his wife. He was not at all inclined to be sentimental ; he was a very matter-of-fact and business-like man, and it would have astonished some of his business friends, who accounted him more hard and sensible than he really was, if they had known how often, even in the middle of business talk, the thought of his young wife as he had seen her last at Beston Station, with flushed cheeks and bright eyes and ruffled hair, panting out her farewell words, came before his mind's eye, pleasanter even to remember than the scene of the evening before, which he had contemplated through the window.

He had grown to think, during those months since his marriage, that it had been an entire and unmitigated mistake ; and that the only thing now was to make the best of a hopelessly bad job, and rub along with as little friction as possible. But, somehow, those few hours at Beston, and the sight of Baby John and Lucy coming to the station, the first act of spontaneous affection he ever remembered her to have shown (he did not know that even this had been proposed by Alice), seemed to suggest a possibility of something better and brighter and sweeter, a possibility of a wife who might learn to love him, to brighten when he came, to be sorry when he left her, instead of that dreary mutual endurance which had seemed the only prospect to the end of the chapter—a possibility of a home where he would be welcome, and whose brightness he would not cloud, nor have to stand outside in the darkness alone. That little mill-girl, Alice Reynolds, was a good sort, and he had made a mistake in separating Lucy from her. 'When I go back to England, he used to tell himself, 'it shall be different ;' and by-and-by he used to say, 'When I go home' and the home he thought of was not Apsley Villa, with all its comfort and respectability, but that little room at Beston with Lucy sitting in the firelight, with Baby John upon her lap.

More than once during those sultry summer months in New York, he had made up his mind

to write to her, to say he was sorry for what was past, and anxious, when he came home, to try to make her happier and win her love ; but he was only used to writing business letters, and was as shy as any school-girl or bashful youth of writing love letters even to his wife. And besides he knew what pain and grief it would be to her to answer it, and how the difficulties of spelling and writing would cramp all the natural expression out of it. No, he would wait till he went home, and then, with Baby John between them, it would not be so hard to explain.

Those months seemed interminable. The business that would at one time have been of entralling interest seemed wearisome and irritating, though it proved, from a money point of view, more remunerative than he anticipated. Every week brought him satisfactory letters from Felsby, where all was going well and smoothly in his absence. Occasionally his manager mentioned having heard from Mrs Craddock, acknowledging or asking for remittances, and that he was glad to hear she and the baby were in good health ; but as he never imagined that this could be the only communication between husband and wife, parted for six months, he only put it in as a matter of form, and very often omitted any mention of her, though Mr Craddock tore open his letters and scanned them eagerly for just this poor, little, meagre information.

But those months which Lucy had counted so gaily on baby's fat, little fingers—June, July, August, September, October, November—had more than half gone ; August's long, dusty days had drawn to an end, and Mr Craddock was beginning to let himself count the days to his return, which, if everything went favourably, might be almost a month before he had calculated. He would not, however, even hint at such a possibility in writing home to his mother or his manager, lest Lucy should hear of it, and be disappointed if there were any unforeseen delay. Would she be disappointed ? Oh dear ! how much he had built on those very slight foundations—that impulsive run to the station to bid him good-bye, that baby named after himself.

But it took even him by surprise when one day, at the beginning of September, he found himself at the end of his business, and free to go back to England by the next steamer if so minded. There was a steamer advertised to start the next day, and he went straight to engage his passage, and spent the rest of the day in buying presents to take home. What would she like best ? Anything for the boy, he felt safe about that ; and next, something for Alice. He felt shy of taking Lucy trinkets, remembering many such he had given her to make the peace after some painful scene of irritable impatience on his part, and how she had received them with hardly veiled indifference, and never cared to wear them.

But it was to be different now, and so he encouraged himself to buy a pair of earrings which took his fancy in a shop. While he was choosing them, he came across a man whose acquaintance he had made in business, who looked surprised and rather amused at seeing this grave, grizzled, middle-aged Englishman spending so much time and not a little money over these earrings ; and Mr Craddock found himself confiding to this

stranger, in a manner totally unlike his usual reserved habit, that he was going home to his wife, and wanted to take her a present.

He got them out that evening at his hotel to look at them, wondering if she would like them, and if she would let them take the place of those common little earrings that she prized so much, and which at one time he had suspected of being a gift of some former admirer, till it came out accidentally that they had been given her by Alice. He was just putting them back into the jeweller's box with a ridiculously sentimental memory of Lucy's little ear and the soft curls of hair round it, when a knock came at the door and the boy brought in a telegram.

He opened it without much interest, with merely a passing fear that it might delay his departure, and a resolution that he would not allow it to do so. It was from George Mills: 'Deeply regret to inform you Mrs Craddock died this morning at Beston. Wire instructions as to funeral.'

He sat looking at the telegram full ten minutes before he realised what it meant. He even opened the jeweller's little box again, and took out one of the earrings and held it up to the light, and went on in a dull sort of way with the thought of how it would look in Lucy's ear. It was impossible! He remembered how she looked as the train left the platform, with her bright, young face, and her hair ruffled by the speed with which she had come, and her eyes bright, and her lips parted with her breathless words, full of life to her finger-tips. And the night before, as she sat in the firelight with Baby John, a picture of sweetest motherhood, so young and strong and bright, why, by the side of Alice, she looked the very picture of health! And that was the end of it all! Never to tell her he was sorry, to try to make amends, to win her to look at him without the fear in her young eyes, to speak to him without the constraint in her voice. If she had died in the beginning of the year, when Baby John was born, it would not have been so hard. He had been anxious and deeply distressed then; he had felt bitter regrets at the failure of their short married life, and had accused himself of the fault being his, and of being greatly to blame; but he had not thought then of the possibility of anything better and happier—it was only the end of a grievous mistake, not the shattering of bright hope for the future, as it was now.

All through the night he paced up and down his room, drearily plucking up the little flowers of hope that had been growing so sweetly since he left England. He was not naturally a hopeful man; he had not the sanguine nature some possess, which fills the future with bright-coloured possibilities, which, though they are constantly dashed to the ground, are as often renewed. These sanguine people get a great deal of happiness out of life, and if they are continually disappointed, the disappointment is not deeply rooted. But with natures like John Craddock's it is almost a mortal wound when a hope has been rooted up; the poor heavy soil of such hearts bears no more gay blossoms or tender leaves ever again.

The boat was to start at six o'clock next morning, and when the early call came to his door,

John Craddock was ready, and his portmanteau packed. Before he left the hotel he wrote a telegram to George Mills: 'Funeral at Beston. Make all arrangements.'

CURIOSITIES OF SUPERSTITION.

In the bardic legends and old folklore of Ireland we now and then meet with a paragraph or a phase of national character which arrests our thoughts. Much there may be to feed and stimulate the enthusiasm of the ardent searcher after the mystic and the weird; but the ordinary mortal of hard work-day life may be thankful if chance throw a few items in his way without having first to glean them out of the obscure notes and the long, dull, heavy pages of prosy compilations.

Like some other nations, the Irish invested even the lowest forms of animal life with the power of exercising no small influence on the actions and destinies of men. The Dara Deil (*Forficula oleus*, or 'black devil'), an insect of the earwig class, used to be an object of almost universal abhorrence; yet its services were sometimes availed of in labour which demanded extraordinary physical exertion. In creeping along, whenever it hears any noise it always halts, cocks up its tail, and jerks out its sting, which is similar to that of a bee. No reptile has been so much abhorred and dreaded by the peasantry as the 'black devil,' as it used to be commonly believed that this insect betrayed to his Jewish enemies the way in which the Saviour went when leaving the city of Jerusalem. It was no small gain to destroy this insect; for seven sins, it was said, were taken off the soul of the slayer. The people believed the sting of the Dara Deil to be very poisonous, if not mortal, and that it possessed a demoniac spirit. Under this impression, whenever it is seen in a house by the peasantry, they always destroy it by placing a coal of fire over it; and when burnt, the ashes are carefully swept out. It is not trodden on by foot, as a less formidable insect would be; nor is it killed by a stick, for it is believed that the poisonous or demoniac essence would be conveyed to the body of the slayer through leather or wood. It has often been related that labourers have been enabled to perform extraordinary feats through the agency of the black devil, which they insert in some part of the implements of their labour; but the few who were so daring as to have recourse to such means were regarded as dabblers in the black art, and were looked upon as reckless, as 'utterly left to themselves,' and almost beyond the pale of salvation. This insect is still considered exceedingly dangerous; it is thought to be a kind of scorpion; but very few indeed are now disposed to lift it to the dignity of preternatural influence.

The cuckoo is associated with ideas of a milder character. When first heard, in whatever quarter you are looking, in that direction you are to live

the rest of the year ; but the distance is indefinite ; it may be a mile, or it may be a hundred miles, and there is always a large margin allowed on either side the line, which gives easy fulfilment to the prediction. This happy arrangement leaves plenty of space for coincidence, and gives the cuckoo a long lease of prestige and importance.

The cat, so intimately associated with the idolatry of Egypt, was not likely to be forgotten in the fetishism of Celtic mythology. The preternatural attributes said to be ascribed to it by the Druids have outlived the Druids, their rites and their systems, and have come down to us refined and mellowed by the lapse of centuries. Caesar Otway, a diligent gleaner of the reliques of ancient Irish superstitions, has preserved in his *Erris and Tyrawley* some notable instances of the weird character and magical influence of this mysterious animal. He says : 'Cats are supposed to be but too often connected with witchcraft, and to lend their outward forms to familiar spirits. The timorous respect persons have for them is increased by the fact of their frequent meetings, to which they come from a distance of seven or eight miles ; and from fifty to sixty are often in the assembly. The parliament is generally on these occasions under a haystack, and, as in another great house of congress, their deliberations are in the night. Their *discourse* is as loud as it is vehement. What they debate about is not exactly ascertained, but, no doubt, of matters of grave import to feline polity : war and commerce, ways and means, the falling of followers, the increase of rats, the shortening of tails, much arguing at anyrate about raising the wind ; for Erris cats are known to have the power of creating a storm or causing a calm ; and this supposition seems to have arisen from cats being observed scratching the leg of stool or a table or any upright thing within their reach, previous to a gale of wind, looking most knowingly and consciously the whole time, and frequently accompanying their exercise with most melancholy mews. The storm which succeeds is supposed to be the effect of this feline proceeding, which is looked on as an incantation, insomuch that, the moment a cat is observed to commence this scratching, it is immediately struck at with a stick or tongs or any other weapon within reach ; it is, moreover, assaulted with a clap of curses peculiarly appropriate to cats under these circumstances. As soon as the storm begins to rise, all the available cats are seized and placed under metal pots, and there held in durance vile until they resort to the exercise of their power in causing a calm. Now, not only is this power universally allowed, but what is of incalculable importance, it is often taken advantage of by the cat's owner.'

Not very long ago, a vessel was detained in Black sod Bay. During the time of delay, the skipper became intimate with and engaged the affections of Catty Kane. But when his vessel was ready for sea, the roving blade, with all a sailor's inconstancy, hoisted his sails and put out to sea, never intending to see the fair one more.

But Catty knew a trick worth two of that, and had recourse to her cat. And now the brig is put into all her trim to clear the bay, but in vain ; the wind blows a hurricane, and she must come back to her old anchorage. From this time forth, day after day, the captain used all possible skill to get out of the harbour ; but as often as he weighs anchor he is driven back again ; and Catty understands the management of her cat so well, that the brig must come in for shelter close to the poor girl's residence. This continued for many months. The cargo is spoiling ; what is he to do ? Why, as the captain finds it impossible to quit Catty, he must needs marry her ; and so, taking her and her cat on board and doing all decently, next day, with a fair wind and flowing sheet, he can and does bid adieu to Black sod Bay. What a pity it is that spinsters in other portions of the Queen's dominions have not the art of Catty Kane in managing her grimalkin !

EXPIATION.

A STORY OF THE CHILIAN REVOLT.

CHAPTER II.

WEEKS, months, passed. The civil war continued with varying fortune. One day the Congress party gained some advantage, on another the President's troops were reported to have gained a brilliant victory. Not that there was any reliable news published : a strict censorship had been established, with the result that a drawn battle became a decisive victory, and a severe defeat a temporary check. Not everybody was misled by this device. The actual fortunes of the conflict were known to many, and an impression was gaining ground daily amongst those better informed that the repeated successes of the Congressionists pointed to a speedy termination of the war in their favour. The behaviour of Balmaceda himself lent much support to this belief. His authority was still paramount in the chief cities ; and, in showing increased severity towards his prisoners and terrorising every one of whom he had the least suspicion, he displayed the tyrant's premonition of impending disaster. It was almost possible to tell how the war progressed by observing his conduct towards his prisoners. Executions were becoming terribly common. The formality of trial was scarcely observed, in many cases entirely dispensed with. Ada and her mother had a terribly trying time. Suffering the cruellest tortures of suspense and anxiety on her husband's behalf, the young girl had to restrain and subdue every manifestation of it, to refrain from all inquiry, lest suspicion should light on them and worse happen. She had not seen her husband since that one meeting in the prison. Amongst the first of the President's orders after the outbreak of war was that prohibiting all intercourse between prisoners and their friends.

One day, a few months after George's incarceration, rumours of an affair between the two armies

reached the town. The Government industriously circulated the report that the rebels had made an unsuccessful attack; but, in spite of everything, it leaked out that, on the contrary, the President's troops had sustained a serious reverse. There was much secret rejoicing among the partisans of the Congress party, mingled with apprehensions as to what Balmaceda would do in the way of reprisal, apprehensions which gathered terror when it was seen next day that, for the first time, the defeat of the Government was *openly asserted*. It was said that Balmaceda was more enraged at this display of temerity and confidence than at the defeat itself.

The populace was tremendously excited. What business was done was transacted in feverish haste. Towards evening, rumours of severe measures of reprisal began to circulate, and the rejoicing of the Congressionists gave way to the most gloomy apprehensions as to the fate of their imprisoned comrades.

At an early hour on the following morning Don Pulido arrived at Mrs Gorman's house and asked for an immediate interview. Ada came down with her mother, and both were trembling with excitement, knowing that nothing but news of importance would have caused so early a visit. When Ada saw the lawyer's face and read the look of pity in it, her heart seemed to stop. She gasped and sobbed out: 'O God! what is it?' Then turning to the elder lady, just said: 'Oh dear mother!' and fell into her arms.

The terror and trouble of the last few months had left their marks on the young wife. A deep line between the eyes testified to the continual pressure of despairing thought, and the pallid cheeks and swollen eyes bore witness to many a sleepless, tearful night.

'I must speak to you alone,' said Don Pulido, addressing Mrs Gorman.

'No, no!' cried Ada. 'Let me know now, at once. Oh! he is dead! he is dead!'

'Not at all.'

The words were reassuring, but the tone and inflection were anything but cheering.

'He is not dead,' resumed the lawyer, 'and you may see him soon.'

'Free!'

'No!—Now, let me speak to your mother.'

'Why not tell me? What is it? Who has a better right than I to hear? Is it about George?'

'Yes; but I can only tell your mother. You will know all very soon. Please—'

Ada went away reluctantly.

'You have bad news, I see,' said the widow as the door closed.

'I have—terrible news. Before coming here, I have taken every pains to verify it, and—'

'Don't keep us in suspense. What is it?'

'George is condemned to death!'

'To death! For what?'

'Ask the brutal tyrant,' began the lawyer, but checked himself and paused.

Mrs Gorman was dumb.

'Balmaceda chooses to assert that his late defeat is due to the plots and machinations between the enemy and some of the suspected prisoners. Seven of them are on this ground to be shot to-day. I have seen the list.'

'How could they do any harm in prison?'

'There is no reason in it. It is a transparent

device. A stroke of revenge and an attempt to strike terror.'

'Oh my poor child! Is there no hope?'

'I fear not, unless our—the Congress troops reach here and capture the prison before nine o'clock this morning, and that—'

'Is impossible. My poor child!'

'If you think it advisable, I think I could gain permission for a last interview; but the time is short, very short.'

'I will tell Ada, and be guided by her bearing. God help me to support her. My dear, dear child! Poor George!—Will you wait a few minutes, my friend?'

'Of course! But lose no time, if you decide to see him again.'

The widow left the room. She was absent about ten minutes, and returned, accompanied by her daughter.

The lawyer looked closely to see what effect the fatal intelligence had had on the girl, but she was already dressed for going out, and the upper part of her face was hidden by a veil, and only the drooping, quivering lips were to be seen, visibly telling the agony of the sorely stricken heart.

'Shall we go?' whispered the old lady.

'Yes,' assented the lawyer. He bent an inquiring look on the mother, indicating Ada with a motion of his head which meant, 'Does she know all?'

Mrs Gorman nodded assent.

Outside the door, a conveyance was waiting, into which the three mounted, and were driven off. Early as it was, the town was astir. Little knots of men were conversing eagerly at street corners and crossings; women and children looked out from every door and window. Whilst driving through one of the main streets, a man on the side-walk signalled to the driver to stop, and, coming up to the carriage, entered into an earnest whispered conversation with Don Pulido, at the end of which he made off hurriedly, after saluting the ladies sympathetically.

The lawyer said nothing, but his face brightened and he looked somewhat less despondent. After leaving the town they saw several carriages driving quickly in the same direction, and a thin stream of people on foot making towards the prison. Don Pulido looked out eagerly and anxiously from side to side as they drove on. Ada was sitting quietly, looking out with that fixed unseeing gaze that tells of thoughts too intense for speech. Her face wore a terrible expression of repressed grief. Don Pulido looked at her, and her agony seemed to move him strongly. He leaned forward and whispered: 'There is to be an attempt at rescue. There is every hope—successfully!—Hush! not a word.'

Mrs Gorman was palpably cheered; but Ada had not heard, or, hearing, had not understood. She looked straight ahead, now with an eager, penetrating glance, as though she would overcome distance and all obstacles and see her lover-husband.

At last they came in sight of the prison, a low building surrounded by a high wall, the roof alone being visible from the outside. A number of people were present in scattered groups, kept, however, at a respectful distance from the prison walls by a cordon of soldiers. The carriage drove up until its progress was arrested by an officer.

'You cannot advance,' said he.

'I must see the Chief,' said the lawyer; 'these ladies are relatives of one of the condemned, and—'

'Hush!' said the officer, solemnly.

There came a peculiar clicking sound from within the walls. Then a sharp voice rang out! One word! A roll of musketry! A little cloud of smoke!

The officer turned. 'You were too late. It is over.' He pointed to Ada, who had fainted.

'What is the meaning of it?' excitedly queried the lawyer. 'It was fixed for nine o'clock.'

The man smiled. 'There were rumours of a rescue. To defeat it, the execution was put forward an hour.'

From the hour when this atrocious deed was perpetrated, the tide appeared to set stronger than ever against Balmaceda. Condemned by public opinion, deserted by many of his best supporters, harassed by an open enemy who outmanoeuvred and outfought his troops, he hastened to his end. Shortly after the execution, Mrs Gorman and Ada removed to Valparaiso, intending to sail thence to England. Associations were too painful to permit of their remaining in the country. It was, however, not found an easy matter to settle their business affairs in the unsettled state of the country, and they were compelled to linger on during all the later stages of the rebellion. The repeated successes of the insurgents had incited the President to such a degree of tyranny and severity that, outside his armed followers, he had few or no adherents. The great bulk of the populace were wishing and praying for his downfall.

In the beginning of August it was reported that a number of the Santiago prisoners had made their escape and fled, hotly chased to the mountains. Whether they evaded their pursuers or were overtaken and massacred was not known. They were not brought back.

At last the crisis was reached. The Congress troops effected a landing on the coast, and marched on Valparaiso. The President's army went out to meet them, and a week of desultory skirmishing took place, culminating in a great battle. In the result, Balmaceda's army was practically destroyed, and he himself became a fugitive. The victorious troops entered Valparaiso amid the acclamations and rejoicings of the inhabitants. A number of vessels which had been hovering about the port, awaiting the result of the fighting, now came boldly in and discharged a crowd of exiled and proscribed citizens. On the day following the entry of the victors, Ada and her mother ventured out into the streets. The town was in a state of disorder and tumult, as was to be expected, but the work of restoring order had begun. The two ladies stopped to read a proclamation on a wall, and while doing so, a well-known voice behind them exclaimed in a joyful tone: 'Ada! You here!'

Turning round quickly, they saw—George de Nardez. The two thus accosted, apparently by one from the grave, turned pale, trembled, and looked questioningly from one to the other.

'What does this mean?' said George. 'Do you not know me?'

Ada was the first to recover. She reached out her hand with a piteous gesture, half incredulous half rapturous, and said: 'George, my dear George! are you alive?'

The young man convinced her of his vitality by an ardent embrace. Then they turned homewards, George refusing to give or hear any explanations until they were safe indoors. Here they related their story—of the lawyer's visit, and his communication of the death sentence, of their drive to the prison only to reach it in time to hear the rattle of the musketry, carrying, as they thought, death to him and desolation to themselves.

'Don Pulido was mistaken, I suppose, George?' said Ada in conclusion; 'you were not among the condemned.'

'Most assuredly I was,' replied George.—'Let me tell you all. I had several interviews with my father whilst we were confined. He showed the deepest sorrow and remorse for his action towards me, and I believe, was unceasing in his efforts to obtain my release; but he had lost all his influence. One morning we were all called into the corridor. Father was amongst us, and managed to whisper to me that my name would be called, amongst a number of others, for transference to another prison, that he would answer to it, and take my place, as he had great hope by so doing of obtaining an audience with the President. Of course I assented, knowing he had sources of information not common to all the prisoners. Well, the names were called out, mine amongst them. Father stepped forward and took my place. As he passed me he slipped a letter into my hand. The remainder of us were reconducted to our cells. Soon after I heard the sound of firing, but I had no idea what it meant.' George paused—he was deeply affected.

The two listeners were in tears: they had guessed the rest.

'Oh dear! and I have been abusing him so bitterly,' said Ada.

'I looked at the letter,' continued George, 'and found it marked, "To be opened when you are freed. If that should not take place before six months elapse, or in the event of anything happening to you, to be sent to your wife." I put it carefully away. Weeks and weeks passed, and I had almost given up all hope of seeing your dear face again, my darling. By-and-by the surveillance of our jailers relaxed. I believe they were being drawn upon to join the army. We managed to establish communication with each other, and then with some friends outside. A plan of escape was formed, which succeeded. Eight of us got away, and reached the mountains. We had a hard bitter time of it—cold and hunger, weariness and despair, were always with us; but at last we reached the coast, and found a steamer, which brought us here just in time to hear of the tyrant's defeat.'

'And the letter, George?'

'Here it is!'

MY DEAR SON—You are condemned to be shot this morning. I, by whose folly this has been brought about, will take your place and your bullet. You may still have to suffer, but at least you have another chance. I have done

everything on earth to save you. I will die for you now, in the hope of sparing you to your wife, and earning her forgiveness and yours.

ENRIQUE DE NARDEZ.

THE CHIONODOXA LUCILLE, OR GLORY OF THE SNOW.

HAVING had the honour of introducing the Shirley Poppy and the poetical Edelweiss to the readers of *Chambers's Journal*, and both plants having become so popular and widely cultivated, it is hoped our enterprising readers will give their next attention to one of the loveliest of floral beauties, by way of experiment in floriculture, and select the Chionodoxa for that purpose. Its Greek name simply means 'the glory of the snow,' and is very aptly applied to a plant that grows aloof from human habitation, thousands of feet high, amongst the wildernesses of snow that envelop the mountainous ranges of Siberia and other high alpine altitudes. There it displays itself in its native home—its sweetness lost upon the desert air—unless a few ardent botanists cull its blooms for their own special purposes. As a botanical rarity, it has very much the appearance of a *Scilla* or blue squill, and at first sight greatly resembles the more familiar *Scilla Siberica*. Closer examination, however, proves it to be scarcely a squill at all, but a new candidate for fame, with the distinguishing generic title of Chionodoxa. The old proverb, 'Far-fetched, dear bought,' does not apply to this new favourite, which has been in cultivation in England several years now, although it has not made the headway we hope it will do when its beautiful flowers become known and its several advantages are made prominent. The Glory of the Snow grows taller than the Siberian squill. It is larger, of a sky-blue, cobalt, or porcelain colour, and is one of our most showy and splendid early-blooming bulbous plants, the petals arranging themselves almost like a blue star, with a white centre, formed by the claws of said petals at their insertion into the calyx. Readers will be glad to know that this exquisite flower is to be grown from the bulbs supplied by nurserymen in the autumn, and they may be treated like any others and with equal success. Take them any time now, and up to November, plant them wherever you choose, and they are sure to prosper. Give them any waste place on rock-work or in the garden, and they will cover it with beauty. Plant them in pots for the conservatory, and they will do equally well, and surprise those who have not already seen them with their simple, modest charms. They may be left undisturbed for years, requiring no thought and no fresh manipulation of soil; and every year, in the winter or early spring, they will unfold themselves and attract attention—'the cynosure of neighbouring eyes.'

This pretty plant completes our tricolour—red, white, and blue, a trio of lovely colours—the bridal Edelweiss, the brilliant rosy Shirley Poppy, and the cerulean Snow-glory. There is this to be said of the last, that it compares favourably with other vegetable blues, and may be used in many ways that will suggest themselves for ornamental work. The flowers may be put under

pressure between sheets of botanical paper, with the best results, not changing colour as much as other blue flowers are known to do. Deft fingers will improvise the most fascinating Christmas novelties from the dried specimens with the aid of a few blank cards; and they may be made to form delightful souvenirs for birthdays, Easter and New-year welcomes, and for sending round the world, wherever love and affection call for remembrance. Designs for brackets and fret-work, for windows, for panel-work and picture-frames, for bazaar ornamentation generally, and much other graceful and artistic elaboration, will be the fruitful result of a heap of these Snow-glory leaves and blossoms; and they will afford innocent and pleasant diversion for the young folk during the irksome winter evenings.

JOHN EMMET, F.L.S.

THE SWALLOW'S DEPARTURE.

'Yes, friend Blackbird, you say truly, all the summer flowers are dying,

And the harvest sheaves are garnered, and the air grows damp and cold,

And your kin have ceased their love-songs, and the mournful wind is sighing

In the woods through boughs of russet and of scarlet, bronze, and gold.

'But 'tis not because the cushats cry in chorus melancholy

That I'll seek the south and summer, not because the skies are gray,

Not because the wintry berries gleam upon the shining holly,

But because I'll bring good tidings to a soldier far away.

'Oft you've lurked amid the fruit-trees in the dear old-fashioned garden :

So you know the dwelling, Blackbird, that we built, I and my mate,

Near the gnarled, ancient pear-tree, standing like a sturdy warden

O'er the bush of sweet musk roses by the narrow, rustic gate.

'There one eve I heard a soldier tell a maid he loved her dearly ;

And she only laughed and answered all his words in mocking tone ;

But since he has sailed to India, I've heard her oft and clearly

Say, while tear-drops dimmed her bright eyes, that her heart was all his own.

'So, 'tis not in dread of winter that my leave to-day I'm taking

Of you, Blackbird, till the spring-time brings new robes for wood and dell ;

But because in tropic splendours that poor fellow's heart is aching,

And I must fly south to tell him that the maiden loves him well.'

M. ROCK.